

INFLUENCING OF SERVICE QUALITY ON CONSUMER SATISFACTION: A CASE STUDY OF ZHANGJIAJIE SPORTS TOURISM BRAND

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ABSTRACT

As competition in the sports tourism market intensifies, service quality has become a key factor influencing consumer satisfaction. Zhangjiajie City, as a popular sports tourism destination, relies on high service standards to enhance tourists' experiences and encourage repeat visits. This study explores the relationship between service quality and consumer satisfaction in Zhangjiajie's sports tourism industry. Using both qualitative and quantitative methods, the research surveyed 340 respondents to analyze key influencing factors. The findings indicate that consumer satisfaction is shaped by multiple service quality dimensions, including tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. High-quality services contribute to greater consumer trust, positive experiences, and long-term engagement, ultimately strengthening Zhangjiajie's position as a leading sports tourism destination. Enhancing service quality can improve tourist satisfaction, encourage positive word-of-mouth promotion, and support the sustainable development of the local sports tourism industry.

Keywords: service quality, consumer satisfaction, Zhangjiajie sports tourism brand

INTRODUCTION

As the sports tourism industry in Zhangjiajie continues to expand, service quality has become a critical factor in shaping consumer satisfaction. In a highly competitive tourism market, the ability of sports tourism brands to deliver high-quality services directly influences tourists' overall experiences, perceptions, and willingness to return. Service quality encompasses various dimensions, including reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibility, all of which contribute to a tourist's evaluation of a destination.

Through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive analysis of service quality in Zhangjiajie's sports tourism industry and its effects on consumer behavior. The findings will contribute to both academic research and practical applications, offering recommendations for enhancing service standards and strengthening consumer satisfaction in the region.

Research question

1. What is the current situation of service quality on consumer satisfaction: a case study of Zhangjiajie sports tourism brand?
2. What is the relationship between to understand the current situation of service quality on consumer satisfaction: a case study of Zhangjiajie sports tourism brand?

Research Objective

1. To understand the current situation of service quality on consumer satisfaction: a case study of Zhangjiajie sports tourism brand.
2. To analyze the relationship between to understand the current situation of service quality on consumer satisfaction: a case study of Zhangjiajie sports tourism brand.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumer Satisfaction

Definition of consumer satisfaction

Consumer satisfaction refers to the state of pleasure or disappointment that consumers feel after experiencing a brand's products or services and comparing their actual perceived effects with their expectations. Brand satisfaction reflects consumers' recognition of the brand's overall performance and affects their loyalty and willingness to repurchase.

Kano Customer Satisfaction Model

The Kano Model was first conceptualized and created by Professor Noriaki Kano in 1984. It was developed as a part of the research into various factors of products or services that satisfy customers. The customer satisfaction model is a set of cause-and-effect equations that measure customer satisfaction with a company's products, services, or overall performance. The model is a useful tool that helps companies determine how to change, improve, or upgrade their products and services to keep customers satisfied. The customer satisfaction model considers various factors, such as perceived quality, perceived value, and customer expectations, when determining customer satisfaction. It is one of the best tools for businesses to measure customer satisfaction with their brand and take steps to improve satisfaction.

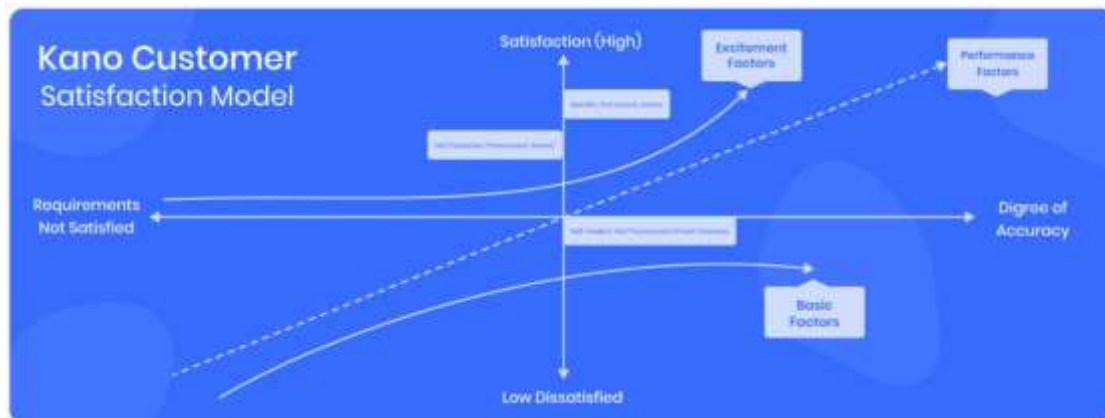


Figure 1 Kano customer satisfaction model

The Kano Model is a framework for identifying the most important features in a product and their expected role in increasing user satisfaction. It also shows the relationship between customer satisfaction levels and different attributes of a product or service. The focus of the Kano Model is to help teams see products from the user's perspective (Lee, Y. J. , 2024) .By using the Kano Model, it is possible to create products that not only satisfy customer needs but also ensure lasting value.

The dimension of consumer satisfaction

Consumer satisfaction including functional satisfaction , service satisfaction, experiential satisfaction.

Functional Satisfaction: whether tourists are satisfied with the core functions (such as facilities, events, and basic services) provided by the sports tourism brand or exceed their expectations.

Service Satisfaction: whether tourists are satisfied with the quality of services provided by the brand (such as staff attitude, tour guide explanations, and customer response) as expected.

Experiential Satisfaction: whether tourists' emotional, sensory, and social experiences during sports tourism are pleasant.

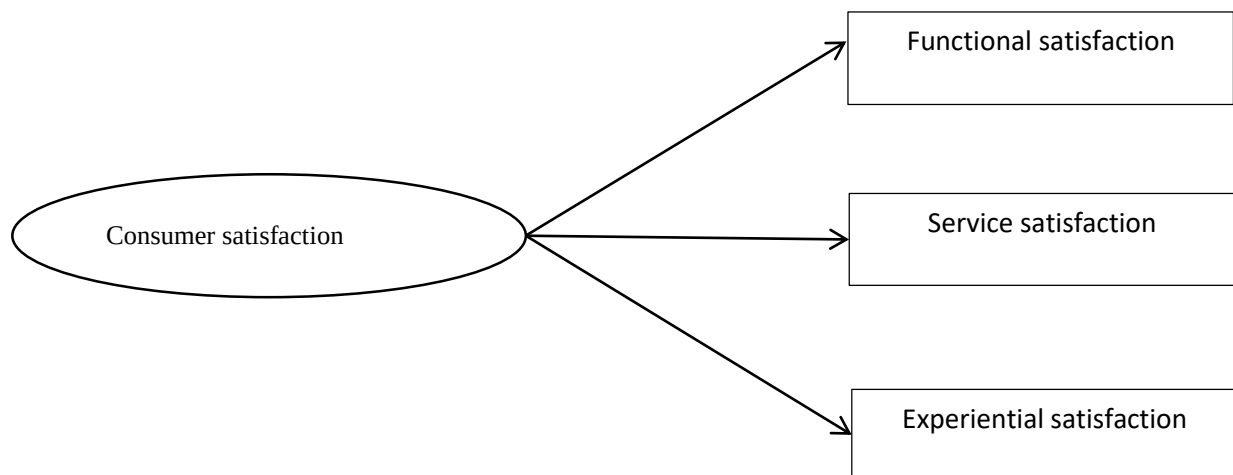


Figure 2 The dimension of consumer satisfaction

Service quality

Service quality refers to the customer's evaluation and perception of the Zhangjiajie Sports Tourism brand in terms of meeting or exceeding their expectations. It is a measure of the overall excellence and satisfaction that customers experience during their interaction with the brand.

The Servqual Model

The Servqual Model of Parasuraman et al.(1985) is one of the highly employed SERVQUAL assessment tools to measure the quality of products or services. SERVQUAL characterizes excellent service delivery relative to customer expectation (Endeshaw, B. , 2021).It also refers to the difference between the customers' expectations & perceptions of services they have experienced (Supardi, S., 2022). SERVQUAL is a multidimensional construct that is measured using the five dimensions of Reliability (RL), Assurance (AS), Tangible (TG), Empathy (EP), and Responsiveness (RS). RL refers to the ability to provide the promised service correctly and consistently; AS is the knowledge and courteousness of employees and their ability to encourage customer trust and confidence; TG includes the physical facilities,equipment,and appearance of personnel offering the service; EP refers to the individualized attention and care provided to the customers; and RS is the enthusiasm and prompt action to assist customer requests and problems (Hoque, U. S. ,2023).

The dimensions of service quality

Service quality including tangibles, reliability, assurance, responsiveness and empathy.

Tangibles: The physical aspects, facilities, equipment, and appearance associated with the service, which contribute to the overall impression of quality. (Demirel, D. , 2022)

Reliability: The ability of the service provider to consistently deliver the promised service in a reliable and dependable manner.

Responsiveness: The willingness and ability of the service provider to promptly respond to customer needs, inquiries, and requests. (Prentice, C. , 2020)

Assurance: The knowledge, competence, professionalism, and trustworthiness exhibited by the service provider, which instills confidence and reassurance in customers. (Sudirjo, F. , 2023)

Empathy: The extent to which the service provider understands and demonstrates care, concern, and empathy towards customers' individual needs and circumstances. (Prentice, C. , 2020)

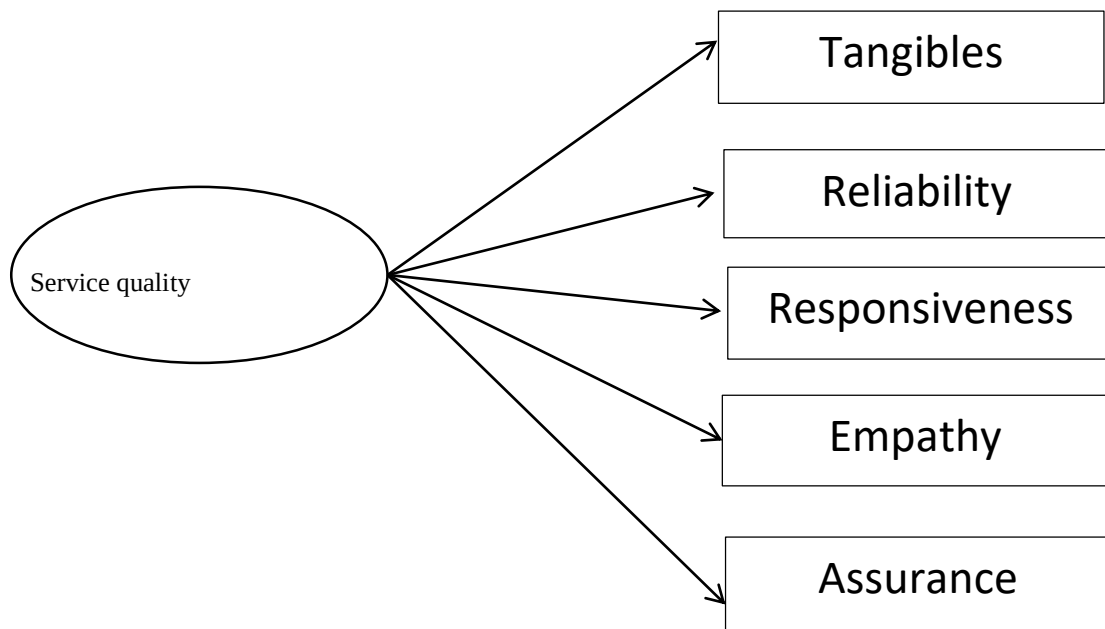


Figure 2 The dimension of service quality

Research design

Service quality is considered to be the consumer's perception of the gap between the service provided by the service provider and their expectations. The level of service quality directly affects the overall satisfaction of consumers. The direct relationship between service quality and consumer satisfaction. Many studies have found that there is a significant positive relationship between service quality and consumer satisfaction. If consumers feel high-quality service during the experience, their satisfaction with the brand will usually increase. For example, Agarwal(2021) mentioned in his study that service quality is one of the key factors affecting consumer satisfaction. When consumers are satisfied with the service quality, their overall satisfaction will also increase accordingly, thereby enhancing the attractiveness and competitiveness of the brand. In addition, Ali (2021) found that service quality not only directly affects customer satisfaction, but also indirectly affects the long-term development of the brand through customer loyalty, word-of-mouth communication, etc. When the service quality is good, customers have a closer emotional connection with the brand, which will lead to higher loyalty and satisfaction.

Some empirical studies have shown that the relationship between service quality and consumer satisfaction does not always show a strong positive relationship. In some cases, consumers' expectations may be too high, and even if the service quality is good, it may not meet consumers' complete satisfaction due to excessive expectations. For example, Prasilowati (2021) found in their research that although service quality has an impact on consumer satisfaction, in some cases, consumers' expectations are more critical than the actual service quality. Especially in the high-end sports tourism market, consumers' expectations of service quality may be much higher than the actual service quality, resulting in low satisfaction scores, even if the service quality is good. However, more studies indicate that service quality is directly related to the overall experience and satisfaction of customers.

Panday (2021) stated that in the study of tourism brands, service quality is considered to be one of the core factors affecting customer satisfaction, especially in experiential tourism projects (such as sports tourism), high-quality services can significantly improve tourists' satisfaction. When Zhangjiajie sports tourism brand provides outdoor sports projects, events and tourism services, the quality of service will directly affect tourists' overall satisfaction and brand evaluation. Abdirad (2022) studied the relationship between service quality and consumer satisfaction in the tourism industry and found that service quality has a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction. Their research shows that customers' perception of service quality during the travel process directly determines their satisfaction, especially in sports tourism and leisure tourism, high-quality services will significantly improve tourists' satisfaction. Several empirical studies have also verified the direct impact of service quality on consumer satisfaction. In the field of sports tourism, Siregar (2022) mentioned that the service quality of sports events has a significant impact on tourists' satisfaction. As a sports tourism destination, Zhangjiajie's event quality, service facilities, and employee service attitudes will directly affect consumers' overall satisfaction. Ayinaddis (2023)'s research shows that service quality has a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction. Their empirical analysis shows that when customers perceive higher service quality, their overall satisfaction also increases significantly, especially in the tourism and leisure industries, where service quality directly affects customer satisfaction and loyalty. This study supports the view that improved service quality directly improves customer satisfaction.

Although some studies have argued that the relationship between service quality and consumer satisfaction may not always be positive, especially when consumers have too high expectations or when mediating variables exist, many empirical studies still support that service quality has a positive impact on consumer satisfaction. Especially in the field of sports tourism, improved service quality can usually significantly improve tourists' satisfaction. Consumers generally feel higher satisfaction in high-quality sports tourism experiences, which increases their brand loyalty and overall favorability. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

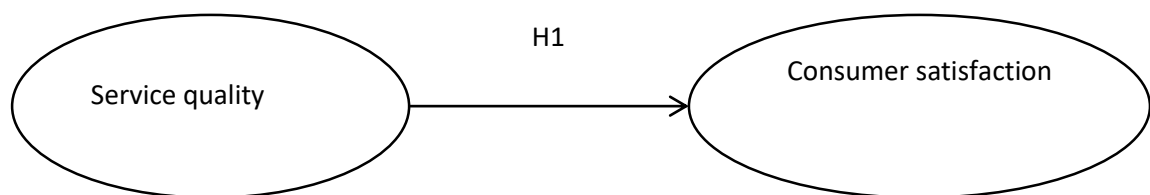


Figure 4 The relation of service quality & Consumer satisfaction

Quantitative methodology

Population and sample

(1)Population

The target population used in this study is the people who engage in sports tourism in Zhangjiajie.

(2) Sample size

When determining sample size, the resource constraints and feasibility of the study need to be considered, as well as the desired level of statistical significance and effect size. This study will select 360 samples from the tourist population. The variables in this study include service quality, brand experience, brand perception and consumer's satisfaction. According to relevant research, each variable requires 3-5 measurement items, and this study plans to select 17 measurement items. According to statistical principles, the sample size is usually 5-10 times the number of variable questions. In order to obtain more robust results, the sample size of this study is 20 times the number of variable items, that is, $17 \times 20 = 340$. Relevant research shows that the sample size needs to be proportional to the number of variable items, generally 5-10 times, to obtain robust statistical results (Wang et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2021). The sample size is too small, and the result error is large and not statistically significant. On the other hand, considering the feasibility of the study, the sample size should not be too large. This study designed the sample size at 20 times the number of variables, which not only met the needs of statistical inference but also considered the feasibility of the study.

Qualitative Research Methods

Population and Sample

The target population was experts in sports tourism and brand marketing and customers of Zhangjiajie sports tourism, divided into two focus groups, each with 8 key respondents, professors with professional knowledge and theories and tourists as specific participants.

When determining the focus group size and total sample for qualitative research in this study, relevant methodological authorities were consulted and the results with certain scientific validity and reliability were selected.

(1) Population characteristics

When selecting focus group participants, a diverse combination was selected, including individuals of different ages, genders, participation levels and levels, in order to obtain rich data with different perspectives and experiences.

(2) Sample size

In the focus group study, each focus group had 8 participants.

RESULTS

As Zhangjiajie's sports tourism industry continues to develop, service quality has become a key factor influencing consumer satisfaction. High service standards not only enhance tourists' overall experience but also impact their willingness to return and recommend the destination. This study examines how various dimensions of service quality—such as reliability, responsiveness, and personalized services—affect consumer perceptions and satisfaction. The findings suggest that improving service quality can significantly enhance the reputation of Zhangjiajie's sports tourism brands, fostering stronger consumer trust and long-term engagement. Strengthening service management and optimizing customer interactions will be essential for sustaining growth in the local sports tourism sector.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

As an exploratory study on the impact of service quality on consumer satisfaction in Zhangjiajie's sports tourism industry, this research provides valuable insights into how different service dimensions shape tourist experiences. By employing quantitative research methods, the study examines key factors

influencing consumer perceptions and satisfaction levels. While meaningful findings have been obtained, further research is needed to explore areas such as the role of personalized services, the impact of service recovery on consumer trust, and the long-term effects of service quality on destination loyalty. As sports tourism continues to grow, understanding and enhancing service quality will be essential for improving consumer satisfaction and strengthening Zhangjiajie's position as a premier sports tourism destination. This topic holds significant potential for future academic inquiry and practical applications, encouraging greater collaboration among researchers, industry professionals, and local tourism stakeholders.

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